6

Peaty Politics

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This chapter explores a particular sort of tension between the pursuit of policy stability and the recurrent politicization of climate change. As climate policy regimes, focused on engineering a smooth pathway to shift emissions toward (net) zero over time, develop, they bring new objects of governance into view. These objects have their own preexisting political fields and dynamics. When policy regimes on climate change were established, the initial focus was for the most part on the energy sector. This has been for good and obvious reasons – fossil energy remains comfortably the single most important source of climate change, accounting for 65–75 percent of overall greenhouse gas emissions in 2010 (fossil carbon dioxide is 65 percent plus, while methane is 16 percent, a substantial amount of which comes from fossil fuels; see IPCC 2014: 7). As a result, policy was focused on shifting supply in the electricity sector, pursuing energy efficiency, and once electricity decarbonization was underway, electrifying direct fossil fuel use. At the same time, the political problems of this approach are well-known: We have many analyses of the way that incumbent interests in fossil fuels (oil, coal, gas) and their key allied sectors (aviation, automobiles, fossil fuel-dependent manufacturing like cement, steel, and plastics) have been able to turn the pursuit of stable emissions reductions into stability as the status quo (e.g. Brulle 2014; Newell and Paterson 1998; Stokes 2020).

But within the logic of a stable policy regime is a logic of what I call *scope expansion* in climate policy. The more or less exclusive focus on the energy sector made sense in a world where emissions only needed to be reduced by 60 percent, as the first Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report stated in 1990. But as the emissions reductions needed to respond adequately to the climate crisis have increased, so has the scope of climate policy: Remaining sources of emissions have become the object of attention for both researchers and governments, and carbon sinks also come into view in a deeper way. This process generates new sorts of potential for political conflict as new actors and power relations are brought into play in relation to climate change policy. Some of this focus regards

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the so-called hard-to-abate sectors such as steel and cement (Bulkeley et al. 2022). But land use, agriculture, and food systems have also become increasingly the object of attention. In the Global South, land use emissions have long been much more important, and deforestation has been highly important to both the emissions profile of many countries (most famously Brazil; see Hochstetler, Chapter 9, this volume) and the contentious politics of climate change. The shift in attention is thus to land use questions in the Global North, triggered by the need for such countries to aim at "net zero" emissions by around 2050 at the latest, to meet the goals of the 2015 Paris Agreement.

This chapter turns its attention to one aspect of scope expansion in climate policy action into land use in the Global North: the focus on peatlands in the UK. Peatlands are global in scope, and there are wider initiatives such as the Global Peatlands Initiative, which hosted a large pavilion at the 26th United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of the Parties (COP26) in Glasgow along with various other partners (Global Peatlands Initiative 2021). Peat has also become an object of climate governance in other countries (on Norway, see Farstad et al. 2022; on Finland, see Ratamäki et al. 2019; on Ireland, see Carter and Little 2021). As such, we see an emerging comparative politics of peat. But peatlands are a particularly prominent part of the land use and climate change picture in the UK, and a focus on the UK demonstrates particularly well these dynamics of scope expansion bringing new actors and conflicts into view. The UK is also a useful case in this regard precisely because it is at the forefront of such scope expansion – having eliminated coal from electricity production and being well advanced in decarbonizing electricity, it is now in the position of having to move to other sites to pursue climate ambition beyond electricity. It is thus instructive for the challenges that many other countries may face in the near future.

The dynamics of stability and politicization still play out in this case, but they do so rather differently. Peatlands, especially in mountain areas, are far from central to contemporary economies overall, compared to fossil energy. The power of those who control such spaces therefore does not derive from the structural qualities that fossil energy has. But they are important for a range of other reasons. A focus on this politics of peat emphasizes one element in the book's overall narrative: that the pursuit of stability in terms of either long-term emissions pathways or policy design over time often ends up reproducing stability as the status quo (see Paterson, Tobin, and VanDeveer, Chapter 1, this volume).

6.1 Peat as an Object of Climate Governance

Peat emerged as an important element in climate politics and governance because of its particularly important role in land-based carbon sequestration. Peatlands are

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the biggest single terrestrial store of carbon globally (Joosten et al. 2016) and thus crucial to the climate challenge (Gewin 2020). Yet they are simultaneously threatened through forestry, agriculture, and economic development initiatives (Ewert and Abel 2021). The UK is host to some of the most important peatlands, and they play a particularly important role in the potential for land-based carbon sequestration in the UK, alongside afforestation. Peatlands account for around 8 percent of the UK land area (IUCN 2018). This is even more so the case in Scotland, where a disproportionate amount of the peatlands in the UK are located and whose land-cover is approximately 20 percent peatland (Scottish Government 2015). These can be usefully divided into upland and lowland peatlands.[1] The upland areas would be termed in general peat moors, and when they are well-functioning ecosystems they would be called blanket bogs, emphasizing the wet character of such ecosystems. I focus mostly on peat moors in this chapter, partly for reasons of space but partly because the complex dynamics of politicization around peat moors demonstrates well the limits of technocratic policymaking.[2]

The UK's climate policy architecture is often taken as the paradigm of a system focused on long-term policy stability: The 2008 Climate Change Act sets a long-term goal (originally 80 percent cuts by 2050, updated to "net zero" in 2019) and requires the UK government to set five-year budgets significantly in advance that must be consistent with the pursuit of that long-term goal. The act also created a Climate Change Committee (CCC), an arms-length expert agency with the responsibility for both evaluating and assessing the government's progress toward the long-term goal and providing critical policy input to generate new initiatives to keep the pursuit of that goal on track. As such, it is often lauded as one of the most ambitious and elaborate climate policy architectures globally (Dubash et al. 2021; Fankhauser et al. 2018; Lockwood 2021), and certainly was the result of considerable political contestation (Carter 2014; Carter and Jacobs 2014). But it is also the paradigm of a depoliticized institutional arrangement, seeking to insulate the pursuit of the overall goal from political contestation, and channel the latter where it exists into either the politics of the design of specific policies or the politics of performance over whether governments have adequate measures in place to achieve the goal (Kuzemko 2016; Lockwood 2013). This depoliticization of

[1] Lowland peatlands are usually also divided into raised bogs, where peat accumulates and creates a raised wet area compared to surrounding land, and fenlands where the water is much more dominant and the peat submerged.

[2] It is worth noting briefly how this shapes the specifics of the argument I develop. Lowland peat areas are often of very considerable agricultural value, since peat is such a rich form of soil. They (and especially fenlands) have been extensively drained for agricultural use since the Middle Ages as a result. They also have been used commercially through peat cutting for horticultural compost, which has become a source of conflict and I discuss briefly in Section 6.2.1. (In some areas, notably northwest Scotland, they are also still cut for domestic fuel use, as is the case much more famously in Ireland.) The landownership issues discussed in this chapter thus operate rather differently in lowland areas than on the peat moors.

climate strategy has been largely successful, and the architecture has largely survived major political shocks such as Brexit (Farstad et al. 2018). It has also, at least until very recently, so far survived contestations from within the Conservative Party while it has been the governing party (Carter and Pearson 2024). This opposition to climate policy has become more vociferous from 2021 onward with the establishment of the Net Zero Scrutiny Group (Paterson, Wilshire, and Tobin 2023). At the time of writing (September 2023) the government under Rishi Sunak has been taking more significant steps to roll back key parts of UK climate policy (e.g. Jackson 2023), raising important questions about the durability of the UK climate policy architecture exhibits in the face of such a shift.

As the UK's climate policy architecture developed, and in particular the overall target shifted first toward 80 percent cuts (in the 2008 Climate Change Act target) and then net zero from 2019, the focus on peatlands became progressively more important to its delivery. This is because of the increased centrality of carbon sequestration: Peatlands have the highest carbon density of any land ecosystem (IUCN 2018: 8) and thus their potential for carbon sequestration is particularly strong. At the same time, around 80 percent of the UK's peatlands are highly degraded and net sources of carbon, rather than sinks of it, as well as considerably lacking in biodiversity (IUCN 2018).

The centrality of peatlands to land-based sequestration was highlighted in the UK government's CCC report *Land Use: Policies for a Net Zero UK* (CCC 2020). Peatlands also have become important because of the way (like afforestation at least in some areas) that they enable the intertwining of mitigation and adaptation – restored peatlands will have significant beneficial effects on flood management, dramatically reducing the rate of water runoff in heavy rains (Goudarzi et al. 2021; Shuttleworth et al. 2019; Vinter 2021). This quality is particularly important in the UK, where enhanced flooding is a key climate impact already being experienced as rainfall patterns change. The *Land Use: Policies for a Net Zero UK* report also suggests that strategies to restore peatlands are a highly significant aspect of pursuing net zero, with the potential to cut emissions from land use broadly on a similar scale to forestry, and on a per hectare basis, considerably more so. Emissions from peatlands themselves currently account for about 1 percent of UK emissions (with the percentage of Scotland's being correspondingly a good deal higher), so they are small, but there is potential not only to eliminate these emissions through proper peatland management but to reverse this and make peatlands store large amounts of carbon rather than release it.

Both the UK and Scottish governments have established targets and initiatives to enable peatlands to play this role in pursuing net zero. The UK-wide strategy, established in 2013, is managed by the international scientific environmental nongovernmental organization (ENGO) the International Union for Conservation of

Nature (IUCN) (IUCN 2018). It aims to have 2 million hectares of peatland in "good condition, under restoration or being sustainably managed" by 2040 (IUCN 2018: 12). The Scottish government's climate change plan 2018–2032 aims to restore 250,000 hectares (about 3 percent of Scotland's land area) of degraded peatland by 2030 (Scottish Government 2015, 2020).

These government strategies to pursue peatland restoration operate via government–NGO–landowner partnerships and through grant funding programs by government, in particular the Nature for Climate Peatland Grant Scheme (Natural England 2021). Public funding has generated widespread initiatives and partnerships for peat restoration, including, for example, Moors for the Future, the Northumberland, Yorkshire, Lancashire peatland partnerships, and the "Great North Bog." These are usually partnerships between IUCN, local wildlife trusts, and individual landowners (including large NGO landowners like the National Trust but also private landowners). They engage in highly technical projects to restore peatlands. At their core, such projects mostly entail rewetting the bogs by preventing water runoff (in mountain bogs in particular) to keep them wet, and then reintroducing plant species (sphagnum moss is the central species) to sustain these rewetted bogs and prevent them drying out (Shuttleworth et al. 2019). Once the moors are rewetted (to become bogs), they then become sinks for carbon rather than sources (as the peat dries out it becomes highly friable and blows away readily), as well as functioning as highly diverse and distinctive ecosystems (home, for example, to the UK's only carnivorous plant, the sundew).

Alongside these government-funded initiatives, there is a parallel development of privately funded peatland initiatives, alongside those for afforestation, which operate on a logic of carbon offsetting by large corporations seeking to offset emissions to present themselves as "net zero," or private individuals seeking to develop projects to sell carbon offset credits on to such corporate actors, as part of their income stream. These private initiatives are often the target of significant criticism for their "land grab" qualities, on which see more in Section 6.2.2 (Garavelli 2022; Macfarlane 2021).

Given that it is embedded in the broader architecture of the UK climate governance system, this approach to peat reflects the desire for long-term stable policy environments to pursue decarbonization: The quantities of carbon to be stored by peatland restoration initiatives all figure in the carbon budget calculations over time to meet the UK's long-term targets. The various partnerships and initiatives represent well a depoliticized strategy of focusing on the technical qualities of the peat restoration initiatives and the broad social partnerships between the different actors through which they are organized. These partnerships and initiatives exemplify Harriet Bulkeley's (2016) notion of climate governance being something that is about "accomplishing" – it is patient, slow, experimental. But it also then entails

an assumption – usually implicit – that there are no underlying conflicts; it is just about patiently working on both the peatlands and the partnerships to pursue climate governance.

6.2 The Contested Politics of Peat

But peat politics focused on rewetting initiatives sits uneasily alongside the other political qualities of peat that have been brought into view by UK climate policy "scope expansion," and which shape the possibilities for peat to play a full role in the overall response to climate change. Three in particular are important to draw out in this context: how peatlands have been important sites of social movement campaigning and struggle; the embeddedness of peat ownership and management in the UK class structure; and peat moors as sites of aestheticized leisure consumption.

6.2.1 Social Struggles over Peatlands

The first such political quality is that peat operates as a site of social movement campaigning and struggle. A common focus of such campaigns, rising periodically for a few decades, is over the peat in garden compost. Lowland peat from fens and lowland bogs is extracted and used widely as a base for compost, given its rich composition of organic matter. The UK government has a current proposal to ban peat in commercial garden compost by 2024 (UK Government 2022). This issue is mostly about lowland peat where peat is extracted for commercial compost use, rather than upland moors.

On peat moors, recurrent campaigning activity has been over two distinct areas. First, there are currently widespread local campaigns to save upland peat moors focused on the question of winter burning and, by extension, grouse shooting. A common focus of campaigns is on the winter burning of the heather that is the dominant plant species on the (dried-out) peat moors. The heather is burned to stimulate new growth of young heather shoots, which are favored by the grouse and thus maximize the yield of grouse for the annual shoots in late summer and early autumn. From the point of view of landowners, this process thus maintains an ecosystem most suitable for the red grouse. The winter burning, however, is highly controversial. Apart from the immediate carbon (and other) emissions both from the heather itself and from the underlying peaty soil, winter burning maintains the peat in a dry condition, which releases carbon directly and creates additional fire risks in the summer. It also generates enhanced flood risks as the lack of a rich and wet plant ecosystem accelerates water runoff from the moors, often into narrow, densely populated valleys of northern England. Additionally, burning means that the potential of the peatlands for absorbing carbon is eliminated, and that an environment with

low biodiversity centered on grouse is maintained. The burning is regulated to limit the amount of peat loss and the risk of fires spreading, and these regulations were tightened in 2021 to require licenses if a landowner wanted to burn plants on peat deeper than a depth of 40 cm, but there is considerable evidence of illegal burns by landowners and managers (Horton 2022b; Rowlatt 2022; RSPB 2022), including directly in the run-up to COP26 in late 2021 (Richards 2021).

Landowners are vehemently in favor of winter moorland burning. Their lobby group, the Moorland Association, threatened legal action in February 2020 when the government discussed banning moorland winter burning (Evans 2020). They use various arguments to defend peat burning as a practice. These include suggesting that there is no real alternative and if they didn't do this the moors would, in the words of Amanda Anderson, director of the Moorland Association, then be degraded by "afforestation, windfarms or overgrazing" (as quoted in Carrington 2016). Elsewhere, they argue that the claims for sphagnum moss projects like Moors for the Future's about carbon sequestration are "somewhat unproven" (Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust 2014).

The second sort of campaigning over peat moors has centered on questions of access to land for walking and other leisure activities. While the enclosure of land in England from the fifteenth century onward never fully eliminated older commoners' rights to land, landowners progressively tried during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (and since in some notable instances) to prevent access to land for walking that people previously had rights to. From the late nineteenth century onward, the newly organized urban working classes in northern England in particular led the charge for land access through a series of mass trespasses – large numbers of people walking on private land to claim rights to walk, which frequently culminated in their being beaten by landowners' agents or the police and arrested and imprisoned for their actions (Glasby 2012; Hayes 2021; Hill 1980). The most famous of these was the Kinder Scout trespass of 1932, on Kinder Scout in Derbyshire, which is a large peat moor at the southern end of the Pennines that range from the English Midlands north across the Scottish border. This trespass is usually credited with having led to legislation in the immediate post-World War II period to formalize public rights of way in England and Wales (e.g. Glasby 2012; but cf. Hey 2011), even if the resolution of these conflicts never matched campaigners' ambitions for full "rights to roam" (Shoard 1987; Shrubsole 2019: 250–252). The widespread access this gives (not as widespread as in many European countries but radically more than in North America) and the set of leisure pursuits, especially hillwalking, that it enables have then fed into social support for campaigning around peat moor management.

These conflicts over access to land, where upland peat moors remain central sites of contention, are ongoing. In the late 1990s, the Labour government introduced legislation to enhance the "right to roam" in England and Wales, but

landowners managed to curtail that legislation considerably (Parker 2008). The right to roam only covers 8 percent of England's land area (Horton 2022a), and after a review during 2021–2022, the government announced it would not expand this area, defending the decision as "the countryside is not just a place of leisure, but it is also a place of business" (as quoted in Horton 2022a).

6.2.2 Peat and the UK's Class Structure

Underlying these political conflicts over access and grouse moor management is the way that peat moors are embedded in the social structure of the UK. Reflecting broader patterns in the UK (Christophers 2018), land ownership on peat moors is highly concentrated; indeed, given it cannot operate as agricultural land in any real sense and it is largely open unenclosed land, it makes little sense as small holdings. Some of this land is owned by public authorities (e.g. the UK Ministry of Defence, which owns 1.6 percent of UK land, mostly for army training; see Ministry of Defence 2022) and some by large charities (principally the National Trust, which now owns most of the top of Kinder Scout, for example). But most is privately owned, and by a relatively small number of people. In Scotland, where there is a public land register (although it is still complicated to accurately identify ownership completely), it is estimated that 50 percent of Scotland's privately held land is owned by just 432 individuals (Macfarlane 2021; Picken and Nicolson 2019). Identifying ownership is considerably more difficult in England. After considerable digging around, Guy Shrubsole has documented that around 550,000 acres (220,000 hectares) of England's peat moors are run for grouse shooting, and of these, around 300,000 acres (120,000 hectares) are comprised of just thirty estates. Of these, four are owned offshore (Shrubsole 2016).

The campaigns over grouse shooting, winter burning, and land access have routinely also been inflected with this politics of concentrated land ownership. Guy Shrubsole is the central campaigner in this regard,[3] and these campaigns have been popularized by journalists like George Monbiot (e.g. Monbiot 2020). Alongside emphasizing the high degree of land ownership inequality in the UK, exemplified by large privately owned moorland estates, these campaigns also demonstrate the character of the business model animating these estates. This business model is premised on elite consumption through annual grouse hunts. This has an economic dynamic in that it is the principal source of revenue generation for landowners (alongside the subsidies they get), although the economics of grouse shoots are difficult to clearly evaluate (RSPB n.d.), but also operates as an important process

[3] See the Who Owns England website (https://whoownsengland.org/) and particularly his report on the ownership of peat moors (Shrubsole 2016).

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of elite political formation in the UK. Large landowners, often closely connected to the City of London financial sector,[4] use this potential to reproduce the elite prestige and power of landowners. Peat moors are basically exceptionally marginal lands in economic terms and have little other commercial potential than as grouse moors, and landowners' organizations present grouse shooting as the most sustainable possible economic use, suggesting that, if it is not possible, then landowners would put more damaging activities on the moors.[5]

Another key part of the business model for the moors is the land subsidy regime. The moors are counted and regulated as farmland. As such, while the UK was still in the European Union (EU) they received substantial subsidies under the EU Common Agricultural Policy, and continue to receive subsidies from other national schemes, and the regimes that are emerging post-Brexit. While there was some attempt within the UK government, most visibly by Michael Gove (at least publicly) and Zac Goldsmith (a junior minister in this context), to reorient such subsidies in the post-Brexit context toward environmental benefits rather than simple subsidies per acre of farmland owned, these attempts were largely abandoned during the political chaos of 2022, when the country was led by three different prime ministers. For the moment, landowners are heavily subsidized on a per acre basis. The moors are, of course, large areas, and landowners receive correspondingly large subsidies.

These questions of land ownership rarely figure in the accounts of peat restoration projects. In the *UK Peatland Strategy* document, for example (a forty-eight-page document), ownership is never mentioned, and only once is an individual landowner named, providing a testimonial for the benefits of peat restoration to them (IUCN 2018: 37). Occasionally it is mentioned in passing – the restoration project discussed in Vinter (2021), for example, is noted as "in partnership with a landowner." But the identity of the landowner is largely absent, and thus the nature of the tensions with private ownership, winter burning, and grouse shooting are unclear.

Conversely, however, land purchases for the purpose of carbon offsetting have had significant attention. Some particularly high-profile ones include BrewDog (the Edinburgh-based brewer of Punk IPA and other brands), which has bought 9,000 acres (3,600 hectares) in the Cairngorms to be able to claim negative carbon status (Carrell 2022a; Macfarlane 2021), involving both reforestation and peat restoration, as well as a distillery and eco-hotel complex (The Scotsman 2021). Similarly, large purchases by the Danish clothing billionaire Anders Holch Povlsen, now Scotland's largest individual landowner with at least 210,000 acres (84,000 hectares) of land,

[4] For example, the Moorland Association's president is currently Matt Ridley, former chair of the Northern Rock bank that collapsed in the financial crisis of 2007–2009, nephew of the former Conservative Secretary of State for the Environment Nicholas Ridley, owner of moorland in County Durham, and outspoken climate denier.

[5] For lowland peat, this is very different, and most such peat bogs have been long since drained, starting in the medieval period, and have become the UK's most productive agricultural land in East Anglia, Lincolnshire, and the like.

have entailed substantial reforestation and peatland restoration projects (Segal 2022). There is therefore a contradictory potential for concentrated land ownership to be deployed for peatland conservation, albeit with highly skewed social consequences (Carrell 2022a; Macfarlane 2021), generating more radical arguments for ending private landownership in peatlands (Heron and Heffron 2022; Ramsay 2022).

6.2.3 Leisure, Consumption, and the Cultural Politics of Peat

The final aspect of peat's politics that is brought into view by peat restoration initiatives is that peat moors in particular are a long-standing site of highly aestheticized leisure consumption (see Figure 6.1). These leisure activities include walking, climbing, fell running, and mountain biking, but also photography, painting, and nature documentaries. Accounts of these activities often refer back to a history of the cultivation of an aesthetic of upland Britain going back to the early nineteenth century Romantics, notably the poet William Wordsworth. These activities are now a very significant part of the rural economy in many parts of the UK, and significant parts of many people's leisure activities.

Alongside this general cultural economy of peatlands, it has also more specific cultural meanings and uses. A notable one of these is archaeology where "bog bodies" (Giles 2020) provide particularly powerful forms of archaeological evidence. Archaeologists also often now have embedded institutional authority to intervene and be consulted on development projects, as part of the regulation of heritage, and the impetus for peat or conservation is often stimulated by archaeological concerns (e.g. Brunning 2012). Another is the importance of peat to whisky production, where the prospect of "post-peat" whisky has been the object of both considerable cultural-economic anxiety given its centrality to Scottish identity in particular (Dick 2020), and considerable innovation in the industry (e.g. Fellows 2021), including the Bunnahabhain distillery, which was already marketing a peated whisky as "decarbonized" in time for COP27 in Glasgow (Carbon Ruins Scotland 2021).

The development of strong cultural attachments to and regular use of peat moors has been both a cause and a consequence of the political struggles over access to land for such walking. This politicization is, however, complicated by the relationship between the peat restoration initiatives and the politics of land access for walking. Since restoration involves rewetting large areas of moorland, it at least risks making them inaccessible for walking. At least in highly popular areas (Kinder Scout is again a classic case as it is so close to major urban areas like Manchester and Sheffield), there has been extensive path maintenance to prevent erosion since the 1970s, which would have to be continued and extended (and perhaps transformed from rock paths, which is the principal means now, to boardwalks across bogs), but which would of course transform the leisure experience itself of being

Figure 6.1 The author's dog, Fred, on Kinder Scout. Photo: Matthew Paterson. This picture is a good example of a dried-out and largely degraded peat moor environment, with heather as the dominant plant species. Successfully rewetted, it would become a blanket bog, retaining large amounts of water and storing carbon extremely effectively.

and walking on the moors, limiting their experience as "wild" spaces. There is consequently at least an implicit tension between the motivation of many to protect the peat moors and the actual consequences of that protection. Not all of the politicization of peat can be reduced to a class narrative of "the people" versus the landowners; it also has this more complex cultural political aspect, and is in effect also a conflict between competing forms of environmentalism (Macnaghten and Urry 1998) – an environmentalism focused on the aesthetic and leisure value of "wild spaces" versus a rather more technocratic environmentalism focused on the ecological value of peatlands due to their function in responding to climate change and improving biodiversity environmentalism.[6]

[6] There are more nuanced versions of this tension also. Among those involved in peat restoration projects, there is a visible tension generated by the way that these projects have been "carbonified" (Mert 2013; Methmann 2013), that is, framed increasingly around their climate change benefits to limiting carbon emissions or enhancing carbon uptake from the atmosphere. By contrast, the motivations of many involved in peat restoration are much more focused on the biodiversity benefits and the value of restoring ecosystems from their degraded state.

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6.3 Conclusions

Peat restoration initiatives in the UK have made considerable progress. Many of the partnerships discussed in this chapter report quantities of carbon saved in terms of avoided emissions either from degraded peat and/or from carbon absorption as the peatlands are restored. But overall, the progress is so far relatively limited. Both at the UK level and specifically regarding Scotland, progress is largely inadequate. The CCC reported, for example, that Scotland was far from being on track to meet its admittedly very ambitious targets, and singled out peatland restoration as particularly weak, with only half of its annual restoration target of 20,000 hectares being achieved (Carrell 2022b; CCC 2022).

Explaining this weak level of achievement is to be sure in part because of inadequate funding, the inherent technical difficulties, and the like. But it is surely also because of the underlying political tensions over the ownership and use of peat moors that provide considerable constraints on the pursuit of a technocratic, depoliticized strategy embedded in the UK climate policy architecture, which is strongly oriented toward a stable set of policy instruments and infrastructure to manage a transition to net zero. This sort of tension is present in many areas of climate policy, as this volume as a whole attests, but the form it takes in relation to peat is in part because of the logic of *scope expansion*: the way that, as the stable policy regime in the UK has unfolded, new sources of emissions and carbon sinks have come into view, bringing novel sorts of power relation and political conflict with them. And given that the UK is ahead of most countries in terms of emissions reductions, other countries are likely to face similar problems as they expand the scope of climate policy beyond electricity supply.

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